

Message Text

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R 232006Z APR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 093487

FOLLOWING REPEAT BAGHDAD 440 ACTION SECSTATE 20 APR

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0440

DEPT PASS ALL ARAB CAPITALS, ANKARA, LONDON, MOSCOW

AND TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, SY

SUBJECT: EUPHRATES WATER CONFLICT

1. ALTHOUGH BASIC SYRIAN-IRAQI CONFLICT IS HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL, IRAQI ATTENTION IS RIVETED THESE DAYS ON SYRIA'S WITHOLDING OF EUPHRATES RIVER WATER WHICH AFFECTS 2 TO 3 MILLION PEOPLE. GOI HAS ATTEMPTED TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST SYRIA AND LAUNCHED MAJOR EFFORT TO GAIN SUPPORT OF OTHER ARAB STATES BY DISPATCHING PRESIDENTIAL ENVOYS TO ARAB CAPITOLS IN PREPARATION FOR SPECIAL ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN CAIRO APRIL 21.

2. INDEPENDENT SOURCES, INCLUDING UN OFFICIALS, AMERICAN ARCHEOLOGIST, AND BRITISH IRRIGATION EXPERT, ATTEST ON BASIS OF PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT PROBLEM IS VERY SERIOUS AND NOT FABRICATED BY GOI.

3. GOI HAS PUBLISHED DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF ALLEGED BROKEN PRO-VISIONAL AGREEMENTS BY SYRIA COMPLETE WITH STATISTICS ON WATER FLOW (ASSUME PUBLISHED FBIS). FIGURES SHOW INTER ALIA THAT FROM MARCH 26 UNTIL APRIL 13 FLOW AT IRAQI-SYRIAN BORDER WAS BETWEEN 220 AND 270 CUBIC METERS PER SECOND (AVERAGE 247) WHILE SYRIA WAS UTILIZING 286 TO 668 CUBIC METERS PER SECOND (AVERAGE 510). IRAQ CLAIMS THE SYRIAN REQUIREMENTS AMOUNT TO ONLY 25 PERCENT OF IRAQI REQUIREMENTS AS ESTIMATED BY IRBD AND SOVIET EXPERTS.

4. COMMENT: REFERENCE TO SOVIET EXPERTS IS FIRST PUBLIC MENTION OF POSSIBLE SOVIET ROLE IN THIS CONFLICT. SUBJECT WAS NOT MENTIONED HERE AS TOPIC OF DISCUSSION DURING SADDAM HUSSEIN'S APRIL 14-15 VISIT TO MOSCOW. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS BELIEVED THAT AS EARLY AS MID-1960'S WHEN SYRIAN-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS FOR DAM WERE UNDERWAY IRAQI REGIME HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN AND RECEIVED RUSSIAN ASSURANCES THAT IRAQ'S INTERESTS WOULD BE PROTECTED. IF SOVIETS IN FACT GAVE AREF REGIME SUCH ASSURANCES THEY ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE RENEWED THEM WITH BAATH REGIME. BASIS FOR SYRIAN ACTION IS NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD HERE AND EMBASSY DAMASCUS COMMENT REQUESTED.

LOWRIE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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